

**An update and thank you from your Member of Parliament**

# Sojan Joseph MP



## **Top 10 highlights from my first year as your MP**

- 1. Over 5,000 cases and policy enquiries handled.**
- 2. Over 150 written and spoken contributions in Parliament.**
- 3. 20 surgeries held across the constituency.**
- 4. Over £13M funding secured for East Kent Hospitals.**
- 5. Positive steps towards getting European rail services back to Ashford International.**
- 6. Served on two Bill Committees.**
- 7. 4970 more children now eligible for Free School Meals in Ashford, Hawkinge, and the Villages.**
- 8. Four new 'Best Start' Family Hubs in Ashford**
- 9. £54M provided to Kent County Council for road maintenance.**
- 10. Voted to improve the rights of workers and put more money in your pockets.**

**Working Hard for Ashford, Hawkinge, and the Villages**

## HEALTH

When I was elected last year, I put health at the top of my key priorities – and it has remained that way. In fact, ‘health’ has been my most frequently used word in Parliamentary speeches.

Working on the Mental Health Bill Committee was a fantastic experience given my background as a mental health nurse. For the first time in 40 years, this Bill will update the primary piece of mental health legislation, giving patients more autonomy, as well as redefining how professionals talk about and treat mental illness. It will modernise the existing legislation, ensuring it is fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and provide patients with appropriate, compassionate, and effective care.

My personal highlight since being elected to Parliament was securing £13,233,000 for the East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust for repairs from the Estates Safety Funding. I was incredibly pleased when it was announced, as I had been actively pressing the Government for additional funds.

I have continued to meet with local healthcare leaders, such as the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Kent and Medway NHS Partnership Trust (KMPT) – our local mental health and social care providers – to push for better healthcare facilities and provision for you.



Meeting maternity staff at The William Harvey Hospital in Ashford

## COMMUNITY

My job as your Member of Parliament begins here in Ashford, Hawkinge, and the Villages. I have welcomed the opportunity to visit local business, charities, parish councils, and farms. I have enjoyed attending local events such as community fetes, Pride, VE Day celebrations, Armed Forces Day, and local theatre productions. It’s been invaluable to meet and hear from constituents, allowing me to raise local issues in Parliament on their behalf.

I have also engaged with Neighbourhood Watch and with the Chief Inspector of Kent Police. Maintaining the safety of my constituents is central to my role as your Member of Parliament.

I am keen to support the regeneration of our high streets. I know how important this is for the local economy, jobs, the community, and growth.



Advice Surgery in Hawkinge With Cllr Chris Johnson

### Some of my activities as your MP:

- Continued dialogue with the Department for Transport, including a recent petition to find a long-term solution to Operation Brock.
- Supporting schools and parents with SEND.
- Organise cross-party meetings with local NHS Trusts and Organisations.
- Working to end the misuse of catapults to prevent anti-social behaviour and animal cruelty.
- Build positive working relationships with Ashford Borough Council and Folkestone & Hythe District Council.
- Actively supporting the arts and local culture



With the Prime Minister after discussing local issues facing the constituency

## TRANSPORT

I have been actively campaigning to bring back European travel to Ashford International. I will continue to meet with investors, operators, companies, and the Department for Transport to make the case for our station. Companies such as Virgin and FS Italiane have indicated they may be interested in competing with Eurostar and the applications are now open for the extra space at Temple Mills.

In January I raised the issue with the Prime Minister and asked him how the reset in trading relations with the European Union could assist us in our efforts to restore international travel to Ashford. I was pleased to secure the Prime Minister's support for our campaign.

I am aware that potholes and road maintenance is an issue of great importance to many road users in our constituency, which is why I welcomed the Government's allocation of £54 million to Kent County Council (KCC) for road maintenance. I will continue to press them to ensure the money is spent correctly.

The Government has also allocated £23 million to improve local bus services in Kent. A reliable bus service provides connectivity, and independence for all generations across the urban and rural areas. I have met with Stagecoach, and will continue to do so to raise the concerns of my constituents.



**At Armed Forces Day in Ashford**



**Visit to Ashford Safe Haven**



**With my colleagues on the Mental Health Bill Committee**



**With students from the John Wallis C of E Academy during UK Parliament Week**

At a meeting I organised with South Eastern MPs and the Rail Minister, Lord Hendy

## EDUCATION

I have been working closely with schools and teachers to break down the barriers to opportunity for children and young people in our constituency. Some of the most rewarding moments have been resolving issues for local schools. For example, Towers School had an issue with their water pressure, I intervened with Southern Water to support resolution and ensure pupils could return to school on a full timetable. KCC announced the sale of the 3G Sports Pitch at The John Wallis C of E Academy, following contact from staff and parents I contacted KCC in support of their concerns leading to the Council rethinking their decision. Highworth Grammar School received Condition Improvement Funding (CIF) from the Government - allowing them to make vital improvements to their infrastructure.

It has been a pleasure to be able to speak and meet so many primary and secondary students - both in Parliament and the constituency. I am excited for the upcoming academic year, supporting the SEND reform, and visiting many more schools.

In other positive news, there will be four new Best Start Family Hubs opening up in Ashford. These will provide a wide range support during the early stages of development, such as parenting and health advice, guidance on home learning, and 'stay and play' sessions where you and your child can meet other families. This is a crucial stage in a child's life and I am very pleased that Ashford will have four of these facilities for families to utilise.

Thank you for giving me the privilege of representing my home seat over this past year.

It is the honour of a lifetime to serve as your Member of Parliament.

I look forward to seeing what the next four years has in store for our constituency!

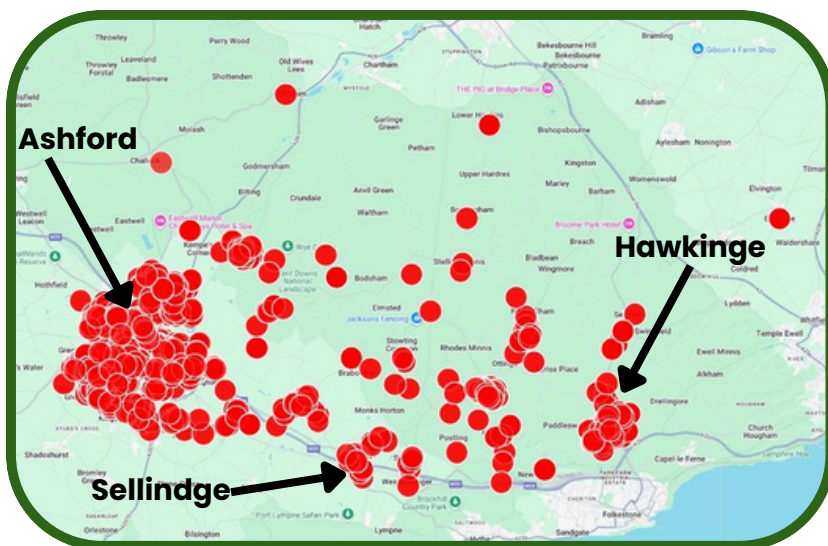


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# Keep in touch!

If you would like to book a surgery appointment, meeting, a visit to your organisation or a trip to Parliament please make contact via the details below:

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A heatmap of my most recent 1000 cases.

# Lots done. Lots still to do.

